

**Remarks**

Claims 1, 8, 15, and 21 have been amended. Claims 14, 16-17 have been canceled. Independent claims 1, 8, 15, and 21 are amended to further define the sponsored relationship where the sponsor acquires from the appliance seller and exclusive right to associate a brand with at least one portion of the appliance. Support for the exclusive right is found generally in paragraphs 36-46 of the specification, and more specifically in paragraphs 36, 37 and 43 of the specification. Support for the associated branding is found in paragraphs 31, 40, and 49.

Applicants' representative thanks the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview on December 3, 2008, where Applicants' representative discussed the scope of the claims in light of the prior art of record, including the general nature of possible amendments to the claims regarding clarification of the claimed sponsored relationship. It was agreed that if such a clarifying amendment was made that it would define over the prior art of record, but that an additional search would likely be needed. Applicants' representative further thanks the Examiner for a brief follow-up interview on December 18, 2008 regarding the specific amendments in this response. No agreement on allowance was reached as the Examiner believed an additional search was needed.

Based on the interviews with the Examiner, it is believed that the claims as amended define over and are patentable over the prior art of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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